

South Precinct Email Community Newsletter

October 3, 2007



Dear Community Friends:

Graffiti

In recent months, there has been a noticeable increase in graffiti vandalism throughout the South Precinct area. We've heard concerns that the graffiti is associated with gangs marking their territory. Rather than the graffiti vandalism being associated with gang activity, ***it appears to us to be more individual tagger vandalism.*** Tagger graffiti represents the majority of the graffiti on our streets today.

The majority of tagging occurs between the hours of midnight and six in the morning. And while some Taggers justify what they do by calling their graffiti "art," going out at night alone or with others to write, paint, scratch or etch on someone else's property is at-risk behavior and a crime. In Seattle, it is estimated that millions of dollars are spent each year to paint out or remove graffiti.

Graffiti is Vandalism. It is not art; it is a crime. It is property damage, not free artistic expression. Graffiti affects the public safety of a neighborhood because if it is allowed to flourish, many people have a sense that the neighborhood is unsafe, and if they don't feel safe, they'll stop going to that neighborhood. When that happens, the negative, more criminal, less civil elements take over. Unchecked graffiti is a contributing factor the public safety of a community and how people *feel* about their community.

If you can't tell, graffiti really gets on my nerves.

Ways You Can Personally Take Control Of Graffiti In Your Neighborhood:

1. If you see graffiti vandalism in progress, **call 911.**
2. When graffiti appears, whether on your private property or on city/government property, make a police report. Call the Seattle Police Department's non-emergency number, **206-625-5011.**
3. Call the Graffiti Hot Line **206-684-7587** to report graffiti on public or private property, including Metro bus stops/shelters.
4. After you report the graffiti vandalism, remove or paint over it immediately. This will help prevent more graffiti. **For FREE paint, call Seattle Public Utilities Re-Use Store at 206-386-4093.** They are located at 3641 2nd Ave S., Seattle, 98134.
5. Ask merchants in your neighborhood to remove graffiti from their buildings. Thank those who remove it quickly.
6. Work with property and business owners. Let them know they have been vandalized if the were unaware ("Hey, did you know there's graffiti on the back of your fence?") Offer to help paint it out.
7. Organize a graffiti paint out. Many chamber of commerce and merchants' associations have done this in the past. For those of you who are members of chambers of commerce, merchant associations, community groups or block watches, devote some time to getting rid of the graffiti in your neighborhood. Contact Seattle Public utilities Graffiti Hotline at **206-684-7587.** They have all the supplies you need to keep your block graffiti free.
8. Tell Children "Graffiti is a crime."

We want to work with you to eliminate graffiti vandalism in our neighborhoods.

Until next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator